



Resources for students

Condensed from ProLiteracy's [Notebook](#), Winter 2014

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is the new law designed to ensure health care coverage for U.S. citizens and lawful immigrants. It requires enrollment by March 31. Additionally, the plan is slated to have an open enrollment period each year. The following resources can be used with students to help them learn about and take advantage of their coverage options under the ACA (also known as Obamacare):

- [HealthCare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov/) ([https://www.healthcare.gov/](http://www.healthcare.gov/))
The Health Insurance Marketplace is the Federal source for finding and comparing health coverage options for all budgets and needs, as well as enrolling.
- [The YooToons Get Ready for Obamacare](http://nvae.us/9w) (<http://nvae.us/9w>)
This seven-minute video from the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation provides a light, easy-to-follow, news-style explanation of the ACA's impact. This video is geared toward native English speakers, although higher-level ESOL students may be able to follow the video's captions.
- [Affordable Care Act Brochures and Educational Presentations](http://nvae.us/9y) (<http://nvae.us/9y>)
A variety of links (e.g., PowerPoint presentations, printable files, and videos, including one in Spanish), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, explain to consumers how the ACA affects them.
- [The New Health Care Law and You](http://nvae.us/9z) (<http://nvae.us/9z>)
Published on the Institute of Medicine website, this 22-page guide helps consumers understand the ACA.
- [Helping Consumers Understand and Use Health Insurance in 2014](http://nvae.us/93) (<http://nvae.us/93>)
This discussion paper by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Roundtable on Health Literacy presents basic information to help consumers of all types to understand their health insurance options.

WorldEd blog gets rated

The [Tech Tips for Teachers](http://techtipsforteachers.weebly.com/) blog (<http://techtipsforteachers.weebly.com/>) is geared toward adult education teachers and tutors looking for straightforward help with integrating technology into instruction. Written by Steve Quann and Leah Peterson at [World Education](#), it has been approved as a Teach100 Blog, a list of education blogs rated and ranked by [Teach.com](#).

Teach100 recently celebrated its first birthday, and currently boasts a list of 532 blogs. Blogs are rated based on frequency of posts, interaction from readers, and other factors. The rankings change daily.



LINCS learning portal open for business



As part of its ongoing efforts to help states connect teachers to high-quality professional development opportunities, OVAE's Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS, www.lincs.ed.gov) has launched the [LINCS Learning Portal](https://lincs.ed.gov/courses) (<https://lincs.ed.gov/courses>), a web-based platform that connects adult educators to self-paced professional development courses. The LINCS Learning Portal is free and now includes coursework on adult career pathways, English language learning, reading, science, integrating technology into the classroom, and Learning to Achieve (learning disabilities).

Users must create a password (at <https://courses.lincs.ed.gov>) to access the Learning Portal. This will provide access to free online courses from LINCS and several other OVAE-funded initiatives in a number of topic areas.

LINCS folks are talking about ...

LINCS also facilitates 16 online communities of practice focused on specific interest areas. Here is a sample of some of the most beneficial and thought-provoking discussions from 2013. For more information, visit <http://lincs.ed.gov/node/2>.



- [Adult English Language Learners](#): Participants in this discussion thread presented many resources for assisting those teaching reading to adult ELLs with diverse literacy backgrounds.
- [Assessment](#): The Assessment group discussed a member's suggestion that "thoughtful, appropriate assessment equals effective teaching." The thread focuses on how programs use information, outlining features of formative assessment.
- [Career Pathways](#): Several participants suggested online resources featuring job-specific vocabulary and speech.
- [College and Career Standards](#): This discussion summarized and expanded upon a webinar on Kentucky Adult Education's Common Core Standards professional development materials. Kentucky program administrators and instructors weighed in on the state's Standards-in-Action professional development model.
- [Correctional Education](#): This conversation discussed possibilities for a change in the culture of corrections by, for example, revising the words and phrases used to discussed the population served by correctional education services.
- [Disabilities in Adult Education](#): Group members discussed the process of screening for learning disabilities, focusing on a resource from the LINCS collection that helps teachers, parents, and students to gather information with specific attention to characteristics that might be early warning signs of learning disabilities.
- [Diversity and Literacy](#): A thread in this group addressed an article on several aspects of diversity, including cultural awareness and recognizing trauma, and led to the sharing of several related resources from community members.
- [Financial Literacy](#): This group highlighted [FAFSA4caster](http://nvae.us/9-) (<http://nvae.us/9->), a free financial aid calculator that gives individuals considering college or career schools an early estimate of their eligibility for federal student aid.
- [Health Literacy](#): Wrapping up a four-part series, this discussion examined how members are integrating health literacy into ABE and ESOL programs.
- [Math and Numeracy](#): Community members discussed the implications and results of compressed mathematics courses.
- [Postsecondary Completion](#): A cross-post between College and Career Standards and Postsecondary Completion, this conversation addressed how states are moving forward to get their adult students college and career ready.
- [Professional Development](#): As a follow-up to the recent LINCS Community User Training webinar, this thread discusses tips for maximizing participation in this community.
- [Program Management](#): Teachers and additional adult education practitioners discussed adult student motivation and persistence, including methods for student goal setting.
- [Reading and Writing](#): Group members talked about partnerships between adult literacy programs and libraries, including how and why students use libraries, and how literacy-related public library services can be improved.
- [Science](#): Many community members who have taken the LINCS online course "Engaging Adult Learners in Science" posted valuable reflections in this thread.
- [Technology and Learning](#): This discussion series considered the question, "How can technology transform adult education and current practice?" and included reflections on the draft report: [Connected Teaching and Personalized Learning: Implications of the National Education Technology Plan \(NETP\) for Adult Education](http://nvae.us/a0) (<http://nvae.us/a0>).

Money matters



Toolkit for advisors: The U.S. Department of Education recently launched an online “one-stop shop” financial aid tool kit for guidance counselors and other advisors who help students select postsecondary institutions and finance their higher educations. The [Financial Aid Toolkit](http://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/tk/) (<http://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/tk/>) consolidates financial aid resources and content into a searchable online database that provides access to resources covering the entire financial aid lifecycle, from applying for financial assistance to repaying student loans. It includes materials for financial aid nights; fact sheets; presentations; brochures; videos; and sample articles, tweets, and Facebook posts. The toolkit also offers professional development information, such as training opportunities and resources for self-instruction.

More information about the administration’s ongoing efforts to improve college access and affordability can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/college-completion>.

Planning resources for students: The Financial Planning section of the National College Transition Network’s “College for Adults” page (<http://www.collegeforadults.org/>) can help adult students prepare for transition to college. It includes budgeting; basic information on grants, scholarships, and loans; and FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) information with tips for incarcerated- or ex-offenders and for the foreign-born.

Especially for students with limited English: The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) worked with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Bureau of Consumer Protection to provide content and advice for www.consumer.gov. This website offers free, downloadable instructional and informational materials for native and non-native English speakers evidencing low literacy in English. These materials can be used in classrooms, in one-to-one tutoring, or by students themselves working online.

What to do if your identity is stolen: Identity theft is a serious crime that can wreak havoc with your finances, credit history, and reputation; it can take significant time, money, and patience to resolve. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) prepared a guide to help reduce the risk of identity theft and repair the damage if your identity is stolen. This resource can be used to teach students how to protect themselves. Visit <http://nvae.us/a1> to download the guide.

College Bound?

As many U.S. students of all ages struggle to prepare themselves for the workforce of the 21st century, and as many employers search for well-qualified candidates to fill current vacancies, the usefulness of a college education for individuals and for the economy as a whole continues to be controversial. A November 2013 publication from [Public Agenda](http://www.publicagenda.org) addressed this topic. [Is College Worth It For Me? How Adults Without Degrees Think About Going \(Back\) to School](http://nvae.us/a2) (<http://nvae.us/a2>) examines what adults ages 18 to 55 who are considering pursuing postsecondary credentials want, need, and expect from a school, and whether these students know how to find the best institution to meet their needs.

Eight hundred and three adults from across the country were surveyed during spring 2013. While a main priority of these prospective students was to gain knowledge and skills that are directly relevant to employment and while all of them said it was likely that they would enroll in school within the next two years, only 49 percent knew what they wanted to study and 21 percent said they would determine their course of study after enrollment.

In addition, many of these students did not know what school they wanted to attend or how to access and take advantage of available information. As a consequence, they did not have or know how to use the information necessary

What students think about college

to make well-informed decisions about their futures.

The adults interviewed cited education costs as their primary concern about returning to school. Balancing the demands of school with family and work responsibilities ranked second. The third greatest concern was keeping up academically, cited by more than half the potential students surveyed. Nearly six in 10 of those surveyed did not think they were academically prepared for college, as indicated by their expectation that they would need to enroll in remediation. Staying motivated and focused on school work was also a concern of more than half of the survey participants. Yet, only 30 percent of the survey participants said they were concerned with dropping out. In contrast, data show that 54 percent of those who started school at age 25 or later drop out within six years of their start dates.

Public Agenda contends that better information would improve these adults’ chances of success, that good information is available, and that these prospective students should be guided to and through the available information so they may make more informed decisions about their futures.

Public Agenda is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works to “help diverse leaders and citizens navigate divisive, complex issues and work together to find sustainable solutions.” The study was funded with support from the Kresge Foundation.

This professional development project is a leadership activity funded by a grant from the Nevada State Department of Education, Workforce Investment Act, Title II (Adult Education and Family Literacy). There is no discrimination or denial of participation on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion or religious creed, national origin, sexual orientation, ancestry, or disability.

10 ways to ruin a presentation

From "How to Give a Killer Presentation," Chris Anderson, *Harvard Business Review*, June 2013



As hard as it may be to give a great talk, it's really easy to blow it. Here are some common mistakes that TED (www.ted.com) advises its speakers to avoid.

1. Take a really long time to explain what your talk is about.
2. Speak slowly and dramatically. Why talk when you can orate?
3. Make sure you subtly let everyone know how important you are.
4. Refer to your book repeatedly. Even better, quote yourself from it.
5. Cram your slides with numerous text bullet points and multiple fonts.
6. Use lots of unexplained technical jargon to make yourself sound smart.
7. Speak at great length about the history of your organization and its glorious achievements.
8. Don't bother rehearsing to check how long your talk is running.
9. Sound as if you're reciting your talk from memory.
10. Never, ever make eye with anyone in the audience.

Space to think

In a recent e-newsletter, Reno Career and Life Coach Kit Prendergast suggested giving people the space to think could lead to new ideas that could increase an organization's success. "I don't mean just the physical space (which is very important) but also the time, quiet and the permission to think," she wrote.

"This is a relatively easy thing to do. As a leader, you ask some simple questions that are designed to open and expand [your staff's] thinking power. They are doing the work, not you, and that's what they were hired to do. It means you set aside your ego and the need to be the expert, to always be right and to be in control. It takes trusting that you really did hire the best of the best." Contact Kit at

Kit@CareerConnectionsSN.com, 775/324-5151, <http://www.careerconnectionssn.com/>.

? What have you already been thinking about?
? What would you recommend?
? What could get in the way?
? What resources do you need to move forward?
? How can I help you move forward on this?